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LIBYA: Qadhafi's Domestic and International Position

We believe that Muammar Qadhafi has sought to transform the social and economic systems of Libya in the hopes of creating an Arab state capable of rivaling Israel

We believe that he is genuinely committed to the spread of Islam and to the promotion of what he considers the revolutionary ideals outlined in his Green Book

Although his actions do appear to serve Soviet interests more often than not, we do not consider Qadhafi a Soviet surrogate because

-- Qadhafi is fiercely independent and extremely nationalistic

-- and because he considers himself a good muslim who must necessarily be uncomfortable with the "godless" Soviets

We do not consider Libya another Cuba--nor do we expect to see this kind of relationship develop--because

-- Qadhafi has too much money to allow himself to be placed in a dependent role

We do not consider Qadhafi a "madman", although we believe he may react unpredictably when he is under stress. We believe his actions are largely consistent with an internal logic which has been shaped by his Bedouin background and his intellectual

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development as an admirer of Egypt's Nasser during the height of Arab nationalism

With these notions in mind, we believe that a number of factors, both domestic and international, have conspired to place Qadhafi in an uncertain position at this moment.

-- On the domestic scene, popular acceptance of Qadhafi and his revolutionary regime has eroded dangerously over the past several years

-- dissatisfaction is no longer confined to the middle and upper classes--the main targets of revolutionary reform--but has spread within the lower classes as well.

The main reasons are:

-- repression in the form of corruption trials, regular purges, and increasingly powerful "vigilante" revolutionary committees

-- political and social programs that offend the muslim values and the generally conservative nature of the Libyan people, ie. the conscription of females

-- eradication of private enterprise, confiscation of property and savings, and poor economic planning causing regular dislocations in the daily lives of all Libyans

-- Qadhafi's mistrust and high-handed treatment of the military has amplified discontent there, particularly in the officer corps. Coup plotting and assassination attempts have stepped up since the mid-1970s with two or

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three attempts occurring on the average every year

[redacted] we

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can confirm that most efforts to oust Qadhafi come from disaffected military officers--the most serious recently occurred in December 1981, when Qadhafi apparently was shot in the shoulder

-- Qadhafi's intelligence service and his network of loyalists, however, has been very effective in aborting attempts to unseat the regime. Nonetheless, we believe that Qadhafi and company have been increasingly forced into a siege mentality

-- Libyan exiles located in the Middle East and Europe have organized into active but still largely ineffectual opposition.

-- Most of these exiles come from the discredited classes which flourished under the monarchy deposed by Qadhafi in 1969.

-- Few of these exiles have any significant following in Libya or have demonstrated any talent for organizing a serious challenge to the regime

-- Their propaganda efforts, however, apparently have badly unnerved Qadhafi

-- and he publicly threatened this past October to revive his notorious assassination campaign against them if they did not acknowledge their crimes against the Libyan people and return to Libya

-- We believe that some Libyan hit squads already

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have been deployed to Europe and are awaiting orders to kill key exile leaders.

-- All of these indications that Qadhafi's social revolution in Libya is not proceeding as he had hoped it would undoubtedly are a source of great frustration for him

-- On the international scene, Qadhafi has a difficult time projecting real power much beyond the borders of Libya

-- His neighbors--Chad, the Sudan, and Tunisia--it is true, do fear his proclivity for promoting subversion in their countries

-- And Qadhafi's minions have recruited dissidents and have provided funds, supplies, and in some cases arms to opposition groups in many African and some Carribbean and Latin American countries

-- But threatening one's neighbors with domestic political chaos in the hopes that they might some day come to power and then remain receptive to Libyan influence are poor substitutes for the genuine ability to inspire respect and to exercise influence based on that respect

-- Because of his marked lack of success in any direct fashion over other governments and a succession of recent failures and problems, we would not be surprised to see Qadhafi resume support for international terrorism--

-- His failures and problems are:

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- His current sense of isolation in the Arab world stemming from the position he carved out for himself after the evacuation of the PLO from Lebanon
- The soft oil market and the effects of US sanctions which have caused temporary dislocations in the Libyan economy and for which Qadhafi blames the US and Saudi Arabia
- His failure to convene an OAU summit under his chairmanship--not once, but twice in recent months--and the prospect that a third try in Addis Ababa too will fail aggravates him
- Now that the OAU chairmanship is virtually a moot point, we believe there is little to encourage him to restrain his tendencies toward international trouble-making
- His renewed interest in Chad lends credence to this view
- While we have no evidence that Qadhafi is planning to send Libyan troops into Chad in the near future
- We cannot rule out this possibility eventhough the previous Chad campaign was wildly unpopular with the military
- We do expect to see Qadhafi continue to provide support to anti-Habre forces wherever he can
- Other more general things which we expect to continue to see are:
 - Attempts to buy the sympathy or allegiance of governments or their officials through promises of

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financial or military aid

- Support for dissident movements which are opposed to unfriendly established governments via arms, terrorist training, and funds
- Attempts to create new dissident movements where none currently exist
 - either by recruiting migrant workers in Libya for terrorist training
 - or by dispersing funds to indigenous muslim groups, hoping to buy Libyan influence
- Backing of coup attempts in support of favored factions
- Broadcasting propaganda in local languages to potentially disaffected groups and encouraging them to work against central governments

Despite his problems at home and his often difficult domestic and international position, short of a successful assassination, we expect that Qadhafi could continue in power for some time to come.

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